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Minutes, Arts & Sciences Academic Affairs Committee Meeting, Monday, March 15, 2010

Arts & Sciences Academic Affairs Committee

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Minutes approved at the AAC meeting of 3/22

AAC Minutes – March 15, 2010

In attendance: Jim Small (Chair), Alex Boguslawski, Wendy Brandon, Don Davison, Jim Eck, Chris Fuse, Barry Levis, Tocarra Mallard, Sebastian Novak, Dawn Roe, Don Rogers, Steven St. John (Secretary), Lito Valdivia

The meeting was called to order at 7:37 a.m.

Minutes. The minutes of March 1 were approved.

Announcements. Jim took the Internship and Credit/No Credit language approved on 3/1 to Executive Committee. Although EC had no objections to the language changes, there was considerable discussion about internships in general. EC did not act in the meeting on that document. Jim had also brought AAC's approved changes to the Academic Honor Code, but EC has yet to take this up.

Old Business.

Blended Learning

Jim Eck said that his understanding of the report produced by AAC's subcommittee on Blended Learning (Don, Chris, and Annie; hereafter, BLS) was that the Holt school was authorized to proceed with Sue Easton's Blended Learning class in the summer (a regular offering anyway) and to work with IT to develop the training course as planned. Jim Eck noted that there would likely be only one professor involved in the training course, and that this professor's course would presumably be taught in the fall.

Wendy expressed her confusion as to whether the protocols developed by the BLS was to guide the development of another Request for Proposals? She did not think it was AAC's mission to dictate the curriculum, but merely to review curricular proposals. She asked if the Blended Learning proposal represented a curricular shift or encouragement of a particular pedagogy. She also asked where the BLS got its information in developing the protocols in their report?

Don responded that the information came in discussions and interviews with faculty. He said that while Blended Learning can be defined in any number of ways, the BLS had determined that Blended Learning was occurring in cases where a significant number of class sessions were conducted in some kind of technology-mediated fashion.

Wendy was uncomfortable that the BLS report was creating a curricular shift. Alex countered that he viewed this as a non-issue: that it was quite normal for faculty to make use of new technology to better reach their course goals.

Steve seconded Alex's interpretation, but cautioned that there might be an accreditation issue, given that BL pedagogy implied that students were not meeting (in traditional fashion) the

required number of times to meet per-credit requirements. Don did not believe there was an accreditation issue in the context of the protocols developed by the BLS. He noted that Crummer was currently launching its Key Executive Program where there are just 2 and a half days of face to face meetings and the rest of the program is via computer.

Jim Eck put in that the scope of what Holt was asking was quite small. In the context of the 1500 or so sections of traditional courses in A&S and Holt, there were 2-3 courses involved in the Blended Learning Request For Proposals. Barry asked though if, since this came out of brainstorming sessions to maintain Holt enrollments, whether this might turn into something larger.

Wendy said that if this was merely a pedagogical, not curricular, initiative, that the Request for Proposals should have been called "Courses Employing Blended Learning Pedagogy". Her concern was whether this program was a "back door" to a significant curricular shift, rather than encouragement of a particular pedagogy.

Dawn asked where we were in this discussion. Given the significant discussions AAC has already had on this issue, what was the issue currently before the committee?

Alex reiterated that he saw no issue before the committee, and that the program should be recast as Wendy suggested. Don moved that AAC accept the documents provided by the BLS. Barry added that the motion was that these documents would guide the summer and fall courses but that AAC would re-evaluate the issue after that. The motion carried without objection.

Asian Studies

Ilan Alon provided AAC with responses to its questions about a new Asian Studies major. These included a budgetary statement for Laurie Joyner, specific learning objectives for the major, an analysis of whether the major proposed included hidden requirements (i.e., prerequisites to required courses), and sample 4-year plans of hypothetical majors.

Don Davison noted that, critically, the new information lacked statements of support from the chairs of departments potentially stressed by increased course enrollments. The Asian Studies majors would take courses in Political Science, Economics, Religion, Anthropology, and Modern Languages. Steve asked if there would be much impact given that Asian Studies students might be drawn from these departments anyway. Don speculated that the pool would likely be social science students. Jim resolved to contact the chairs of each affected department to solicit statements for the next AAC meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:38.